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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 001487

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/25/2014

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SUBJECT: MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY AND WATER UPDATES ON
INVESTIGATION INTO BLACKOUT

REF: MANAMA 1319

Classified By: Ambassador William T. Monroe
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (U) The Minister of Electricity and Water Shaikh Abdulla bin Salman Al Khalifa discussed with the Ambassador on September 20 Bahrain's water supply and the investigation into the recent national electricity blackout. Shaikh Abdulla stated that Bahrain's aquifer is becoming increasingly salty. He added that one third of Bahrain's water supply comes from the aquifer and two thirds from its desalination plants. He explained that Bahrain has two desalination plants operating at full capacity (60 million gallons per day each) and in 2006 a planned third desalination plant will come on line with a capacity of 97 million gallons per day. In response to the Ambassador's question, the Minister explained that the tendering process for the construction of the plant will be open and he welcomed all interested American companies to bid.

2. (C) Shaikh Abdulla told the Ambassador that the investigation into the national blackout was ongoing (reftel). He added that the Prime Minister requested that Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa review the investigative report and present its findings. Shaikh Abdulla blamed the national blackout on aluminum manufacturer ALBA, claiming that the company switched 320 megawatts of power from its internal grid onto the national grid, causing a surge that triggered the safety shut-down of Bahrain's main power plant.
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